

# econnections



September 2006 The electronic newsletter of MoDOT District 4, Kansas City Area

## MEETINGS/TRAINING

### Thursday, September 7

Maintenance Superintendents, 9-11:30 a.m., Room 136E

### Wednesday, September 13

Missouri State Highways and Transportation Commission, Fort Leonard Wood

### Thursday, September 14, Room 236E

Job Status, District 1, 8-9:30 a.m., video conf.  
Job Status, Group 1, 9:30-10:30 a.m.  
Job Status, Group 2, 10:30-11:30 a.m.  
Job Status, Group 3, 12:30-1:30 p.m.  
Job Status, Group 4, 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

### Monday, September 18

Lamson Area Team, 9-11 a.m., district office

### Tuesday, September 19

Stock Area Team, 8-10 a.m., 87<sup>th</sup> Street project office

### Thursday, September 21

Management Team, 9-11 a.m. Boardroom

### Wednesday, October 4

Munck Area Team, 8:30-11:30 a.m., district office

## EVENTS

### Thursday, September 7

Route 45 public meeting, 4-7 p.m., Platte County Community Center South, 8875 Clark Ave., Parkville

### Monday, September 11

Route 58 bridge over Middle Big Creek public hearing, 5-7 p.m., Pleasant Hill Memorial Building, 212 E. Cedar St., Pleasant Hill

### Tuesday, September 12

Route 150 widening public meeting, 6-8:30 p.m., Meadowmere Elementary School, 7010 E. 136th Street, Grandview

### Monday, September 18

Interstate 29 rehabilitation public meeting, 5-7 p.m., Platte Sewer District Building, 414 Route 273, Tracy

## Area development, projected traffic increase triggers projects

### Construction Begins on Route 7 Improvements

by Jennifer Benefield

One and a half billion dollars over 10 years. This is the estimated economic growth projected for Blue Springs, Mo. and the stimulus for accelerating improvements to Route 7 – the arterial roadway in the center of a residential and commercial boon in the southern portion of the city.

The Route 7 improvements, divided into two phases, are a collaborative effort of the City of Blue Springs and the Missouri Department of Transportation. Designed by City of Blue Springs consultant TranSystems Corporation, the project will improve safety and add capacity through roadway widening and a new traffic signal system at Route 7 and Colbern Road.

"The city was very proactive in contacting MoDOT once they became aware of the devel-



District Engineer Beth Wright attended an Aug. 3 Route 7 ground breaking ceremony with (l-r) Sen. Matt Bartle, Rep. Brian Yates, Rep. Bryan Pratt, Rep. Gary Dusenbery and Sam Panettiere for U.S. Congressman Graves.

opment," said Transportation Project Manager Susan McCubbins. "They knew this development would significantly increase traffic volumes in the area and they wanted improvements in place that could handle it."

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## Public input helps plan

### A Better Route 150 Project

by Steve Porter

MoDOT has learned that it designs better roads when the department has a dialogue with the public. So how best to go about designing a new, four-lane Route 150 between Routes 291 and 71? First have a talk, well, lots of talks, with the public.

Since May, MoDOT and its consultants have met with 16 stakeholder groups and conducted four community coffees to seek input on the \$30 million project. That input is helping to direct the new highway design, which is quite

different than initially posed during the environmental process in 2001.

More than five years ago, the department held a public meeting on the rapidly developing corridor and came away with a concept to build a rural four-lane highway with a wide, depressed median and paved shoulders. Design speeds would be 60 mph and right-of-way acquisition would have cut a wide swath,

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## News from Across the District

**Condolences:** our prayers are with the families of Assistant Maintenance Superintendent **Jeffery Wesley** and Intermediate Construction Technician **Barbara Nyberg**.

Jeffery's mother, Gladys Wesley, passed away August 7.

Barbara's father, James Shine, passed away August 7. The family suggests contributions to "Cancer Action" and can be mailed to Speaks Suburban Chapel, 18020 E. 39th Street, Independence, Mo. 64055.

The D4 Employees' Fund committee raised \$220 at an August 16 ice cream social. Donations from Lee's Summit Dairy Queen, Blue Ribbon Cookies, Hy-Vee and Wal-Mart helped boost profits for the fund that benefits employees throughout the year who find themselves in financial distress due to events that are no fault of their own.

Community Relations hosted a safety booth August 15 at the House of Joy in Ray County. Approximately 100 children from 40 families

stopped by to pick up school supplies and learn about seat belt and booster seat safety.

Kansas City Scout won the MOVITE's Transportation Achievement Award. MOVITE is the Missouri Valley Section of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and is composed of six states: Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Each state had local ITE chapters eligible for MOVITE's annual awards competition. Scout was commended for its use of technology in traffic management, its comprehensive system, partnerships, and a well-written entry.

The MHTC once again voted to cover the entire premium cost increase for MoDOT's medical plan. That means PPO subscribers – active employees and retirees – will have no increase in out-of-pocket health care premium costs next year. This makes the seventh straight year that active employees in the PPO plan have had no increase in out-of-pocket premiums. MoDOT will no longer offer the HMO benefit plan (the current Open Access III plan) beginning January 1, 2007 due to cost. More specific information will arrive by mail, and Business and Benefits staff will meet with employees soon about this change.

## Route 150

*continued from page 1*

taking many homes.

But in the ensuing five years, development along Route 150 kicked into overdrive, changing the texture of the corridor. During this spring and summer's meetings, MoDOT asked stakeholders if they would consider a narrower, urban four-lane design with a 45-mph speed and limited access.

People living along the most densely developed segments, in Lee's Summit to the east and Grandview to the west, are generally more supportive of the narrower corridor. Kansas City stakeholders, who are sandwiched in the middle, also saw the change as less intrusive and more forward-thinking. The narrower footprint also allows designers some flexibility to build on either side of the current two-lane alignment, avoiding problematic issues such as a water tower or dense residential development.

More public input is scheduled this fall as the project moves toward a preliminary design. By November, MoDOT expects to have a plan in place for a public hearing. In 2008, construction is expected to begin and the project could be completed in 2010.

## POW/MIA Memorial Highway Dedication Sept. 16 in Kearney

*by Joel Blobaum*

Sept. 16 ceremony at Kearney High School will designate a 65-mile section of Interstate 35 as POW/MIA Memorial Highway. The special designation includes the portion of I-35 between one-half mile north of Kearney and one-half mile south of Bethany.

The 1 p.m. ceremony at Kearney will honor the 408 Missourians still listed as prisoners of war or missing in action with the ceremonial lighting of 408 battery-powered candles. Barry Bridger, who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam from 1967 to 1973, will be the guest speaker.

Signs marking the highway designation will be unveiled during the Sept. 16 ceremony. A second dedication ceremony is scheduled at the Cameron Veterans Home on October 7.

### econnections sources

**Construction** Bev Chrisco, 6341

**Design** Flo Noear, 0455

**Regional Counsel** LeAnn Francis, 6382

**Administration** Judy Magruder, 6309

**General Services** Toni Terry, 0050

**Human Resources** Belinda Fite, 6321

**Right of Way** Melbra Taylor, 6351

**Traffic** Dawn Phillips, 0401

**Editor** Jennifer Benefield, 6328



Richard Harris of Eaton Corporation (right) explains operation of a new diesel-electric bucket truck to MoDOT Signals Electrician Keith Dawson during an August 22 training session (photo left). The new hybrid truck technology enables the engine to be shut off at the work site, which reduces emissions and saves fuel. District 4 is helping test the new equipment over the next 18 months. Three local television stations filmed the new equipment in action at the training session (photo right).





## Corporate Ladder

### Welcome to District 4

**Crew worker** Jennifer Beauregard, Robert Davis, Stephen Paul, Caleb Shank, Brett Wahn, Debra Walter

**Senior office assistant** Monica Bond

**Signal and lighting electrician** Keith Dawson

**Transportation project manager** Mark Fisher

### Promoted

**Procurement agent** Lori Coulter

**Maintenance specialist** Richard Dennis, Glen Parkes

**Risk management technician** Tiffany Lytle

**Intermediate crew worker** Ronald Denson

**Senior crew worker** William Meins

**Senior signal and lighting electrician** Brian Goodall

**Senior traffic studies specialist** Cedrick Owens

**Executive assistant** Holly Riggs-Matthews

**Motorist Assist operator** Stephen Spire

**Transportation planning specialist** Jackie White

### Watch Your Mail

## Benefit Information To Be Distributed On CD

Active employees and currently enrolled retirees in the dental/vision plan through Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan (MCHCP):

Look for your dental and vision plan open enrollment information, as well as your Cafeteria Plan booklet, to be mailed to your home in the form of a CD. MCHCP recently announced it would no longer mail the dental/vision Member Handbook and Enrollment Guide in printed form, opting for the quicker, cheaper electronic version. MCHCP said the change gives employees quick access to benefit information and saves printing and mailing costs. The CD is also compact, which makes for easy storage and handling.

If you aren't able to play a CD at home or work, you can request a printed copy of the 2007 Dental/Vision Member Handbook and Enrollment Guide by calling MCHCP at 800-487-0771 or logging onto MCHCP's Web site at <https://my.mchcp.org>. You will need your MCHCPid or Social Security number and PIN to access the Web site.

The open enrollment period for active employees for the dental and vision benefits for Jan. 1, 2007 coverage is during the month of October. If you know you need a printed form, contact MCHCP now.

For more information on the Cafeteria Plan, visit [www.mocafe.com](http://www.mocafe.com). Call MCHCP's Benefit Specialists at 800-487-0771 to ask questions about the state-sponsored dental and vision coverage.

## Work Zone Signs Send Strong Signal

by Steve Porter

Reckless drivers take heed. Injure or kill a highway worker and you could be fined \$10,000 and lose your license for a year.

Signs warning of the stiffer penalties went up throughout District 4 and Missouri beginning Aug. 28, when the new laws became effective. MoDOT unveiled a small version of the new signs during a news conference at District 4 offices, hammering home key points in an effort to get drivers to slow down, pay attention and eliminate distractions when driving through work zones.

MoDOT District Engineer Beth Wright reminded those gathered for the event that two highway workers were killed earlier this month in Missouri work zones.

Greg Kaaz, vice president of the Heavy Constructors Association, said workers are out there to help motorists, and rely on drivers to pay attention.

Captain Vince Ellis, commander of Troop A of the Missouri Highway Patrol spoke about losing a trooper only a couple of years ago on I-70 because of an inattentive driver.

The new signs read: Hit a Worker, \$10,000 Fine, Lose Your License.

The new law includes these provisions:

- Imposes a fine for killing or injuring a highway worker up to \$10,000 and loss of license for a year.

- Creates two new crimes – endangerment of a highway worker and aggravated endangerment of a highway worker.

- Sets a \$75 fine for a person convicted of a subsequent moving violation within a work zone; a person convicted of a subsequent speeding or passing violation in a work zone gets a \$300 fine.

- Expands the definition of a highway worker to include suppliers and delivery personnel to a construction site.

- Repeals a sign-covering and uncovering provision – informational signs will now remain unveiled in work zones.

Between 2000 and 2004, 104 motorists were killed and 5,327 motorists were injured in Missouri work zones. Since 2000, 214 MoDOT employees have been injured and seven killed in work zones.



District Engineer Beth Wright, Motorist Assist Operator Scott Banes and Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Mark O'Dowd unveil a scaled-down version of the new work zone penalty signs.

## Route 7

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Construction began in mid-July on Route 7 Phase I improvements from Wyatt Road to just north of the Colbern Road intersection. These improvements include widening Route 7 from two lanes to four, a landscaped median, bicycle accommodations, and sufficient right-of-way to install sidewalks and traffic signals as future development occurs. Route 7 will remain open to traffic during construction with minimal disruptions. Made possible by the 2004 passage of Amendment 3, this \$6.3 million improvement is expected to be complete in late 2007.

"One of the reasons we received Amendment 3 funding for this project is because the city and area developers were willing to contribute a significant amount of money – they

were committed to this project," said McCubbins. "The Amendment 3 funding allowed the project to be accelerated and regular meetings and cooperation with the city, county, developers and utility companies helped the project to move quickly and smoothly."

Route 7 Phase II improvements are simultaneously under way. Approximately 50 people attended an Aug. 17 public hearing to learn more about a plan that calls for intersection improvements at Colbern Road to be constructed by fall 2008, dependent on right-of-way acquisition and funding. The design takes into consideration the projected traffic associated with developments in the surrounding area and includes bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.

## District Volunteers Host Missouri State Fairgoers

District 4 employees were in Sedalia, Mo. Friday, Aug. 11 to greet fairgoers at MoDOT's Highway Memorial Gardens and Transportation Exposition Center. Assistant Maintenance Supervisor Dennis Bowers coordinated this year's event. The volunteers passed out giveaway items and informed the public about a wide range of MoDOT programs and campaigns.

District Engineer Beth Wright shared primary seat belt enforcement and safety information with the volunteers and encouraged them to enjoy their time at the

fair at an Aug. 8 planning meeting. "I really appreciate each of you volunteering to do this," said Wright. "This is a great opportunity to promote our district."

According to the Associated Press, as many as 340,000 people attended this year's 11-day event Aug. 10-20.

District 4 state fair volunteers: Tom Bates, Cindy Beebe, Jennifer Benefield, Dennis Bowers, Jeff Burgard, Lori

Coulter, Don Huff, Charles Kidwiler, Brenda Jones, Sam Love, Tiffany Lytle and Gerry Wheatley.

Photos: Jennifer Benefield  
Dennis Bowers



Afternoon fair volunteers from left to right: Jeff Burgard, Tom Bates, Dennis Bowers, Brenda Jones & Charles Kidwiler.

Morning fair volunteers from left to right: Jennifer Benefield, Gerry Wheatley, Tiffany Lytle, Sam Love, Cindy Beebe and Don Huff.



Sam Love and Tiffany Lytle man the counter at MoDOT's the Transportation Exposition Center.



Cindy Beebe greets a fairgoer.

Cindy Beebe, Tiffany Lytle and Sam Love (left to right) distribute giveaway items to morning fairgoers.





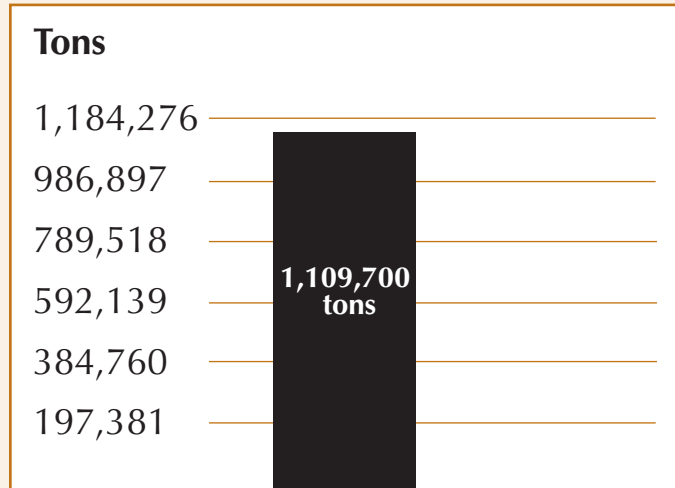
# Smooth Roads Initiative

490 centerline miles of the Kansas City Area's busiest roadways in good condition by December 2006

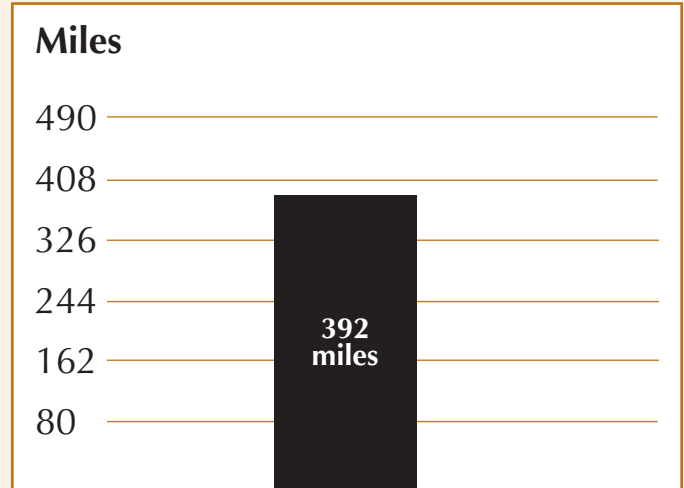
## Progress to Date



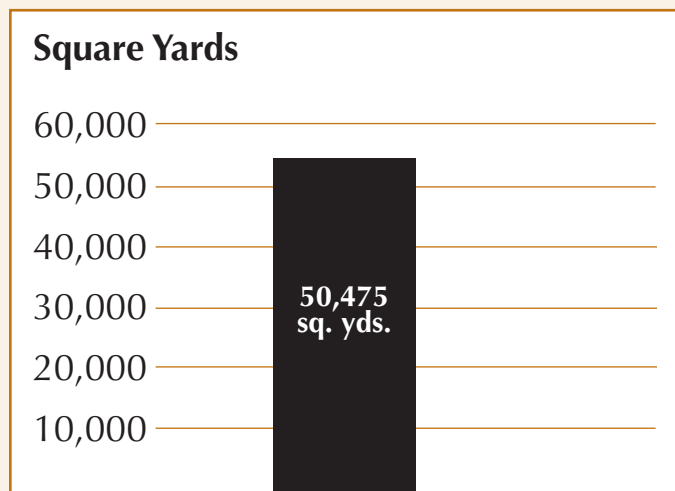
***Smoother, Safer, Sooner***  
***Amendment 3***



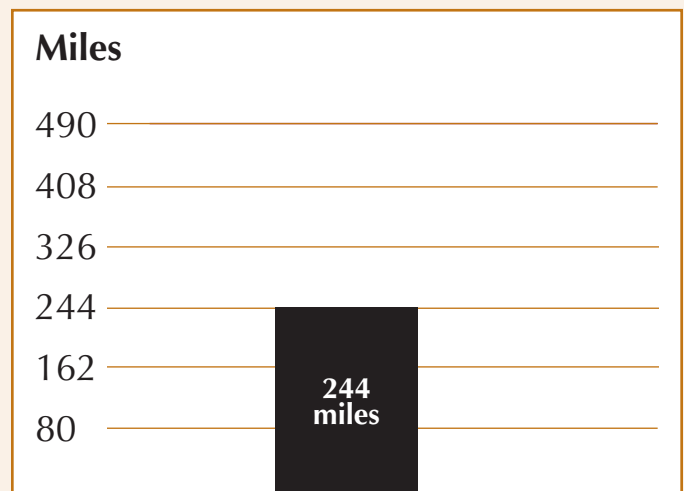
**Tons of asphalt**



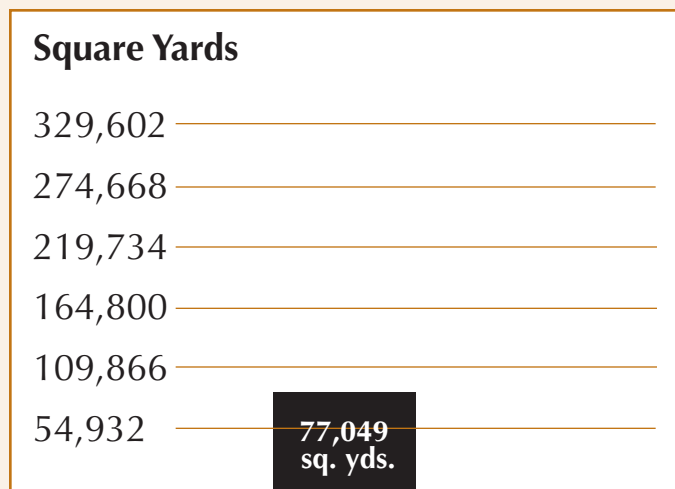
**Striping**



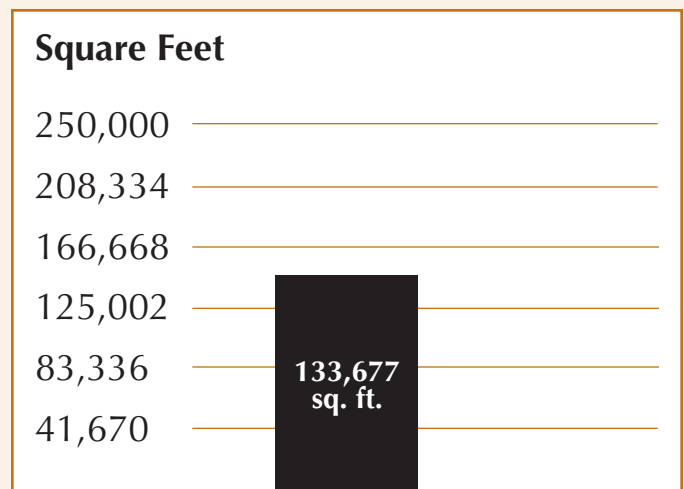
**Pavement repair**



**Delineators**



**Ultrathin-bonded wearing surface**

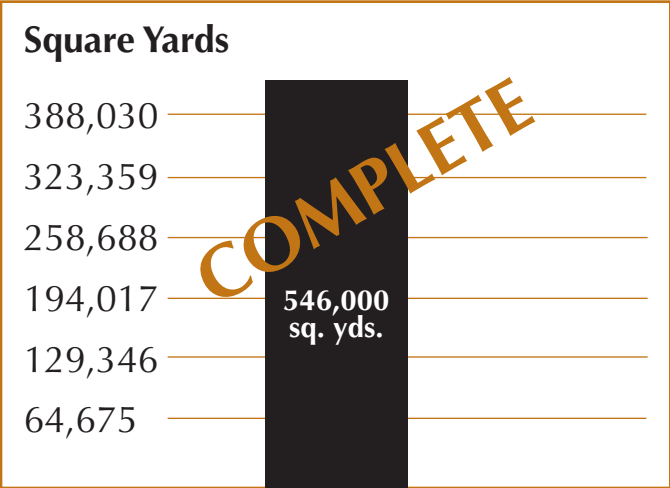


**Signs**

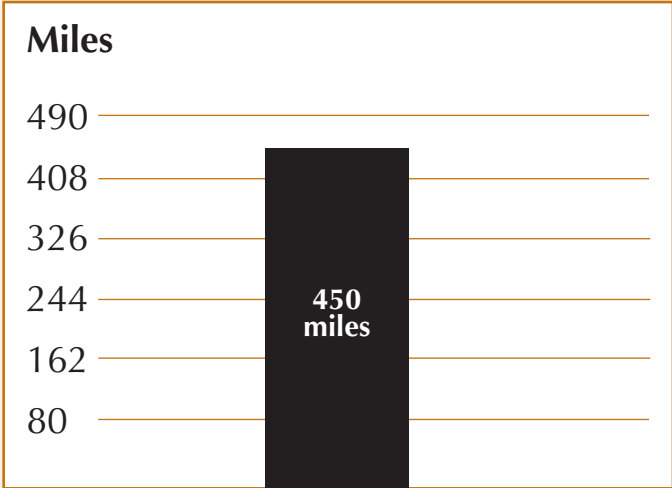
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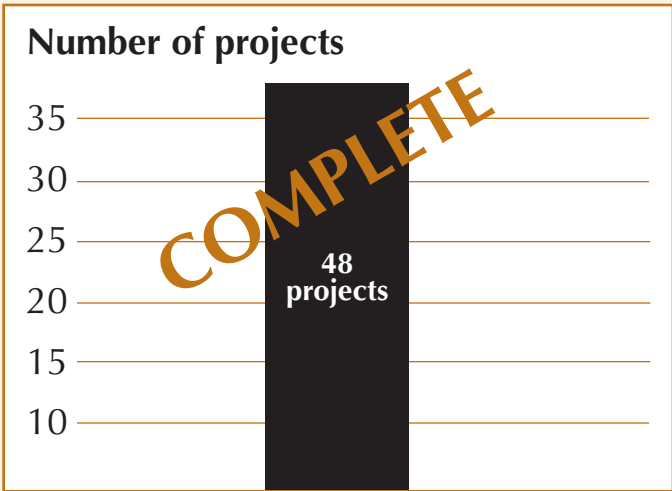
## Progress to Date



Diamond grinding



Clear zones cleared



Projects designed